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tain fine flavor, a glow and a beauty that are unrecoverable. Of this kind also was the very special degree of welcome and hospitality accorded by our hosts and expressed in the welcoming speech of President Schurmann. In ancient days, philosophical disputations were of the nature of love feasts. Wine and dance and song were fitting interludes for the rhapsodies in which the true, the beautiful and the good were praised and men communicated to one another their loftier and more spiritual allegiances. It is not often nowadays that we can approximate, howsoever remotely, to a revival of the Platonic banquet. Our speculations are carried on in ugly glass-rooms; social and intellectual enthusiasms are lamentably divorced; and oftentimes we are deprecating in our approach to the interests which should be publicly admitted to be our greatest glory. We have forgotten that the true is compatible with the beautiful—that it is, the eloquent Presidential address of Professor Alexander should serve as a forcible reminder. But in rather uncommon measure the drabness of ordinary congregation for debate was lost in the unusual conditions and special fortune of the Ithaca meeting. Not a perfectly revived Platonic banquet, to be sure—but something in many features like it. On the day when the men of the association take their courage in their hands and, instead of waiting in nervous expectation for the moment of disbanding, bravely and gladly unite the joys of philosophy with those of smoke—even in the presence of ladies—on that day one step forward will have been taken to Platonic, and other millennia.

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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

Strife of Systems and Productive Duality: An Essay in Philosophy.

WILMON HENRY SHELDON. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1918. Pp. x + 534.

The attempt to bring out the significance of Sheldon's book by "placing" it among its peers in recent metaphysical literature, moves me to venture, perhaps too rashly, the generalization that the metaphysicians of our age, at least in England and America, gravitate towards one or other of two types. Either, like Bosanquet, they regard metaphysics as "the communication of a grave experience, and not the mere framework of a theory" and as "knowledge carrying deep conviction and appealing to our whole being" (*cf. The Principle of Individuality and Value*, pp. 1, 2). Or, like Bradley, they look upon metaphysics as an unusually obstinate attempt

to think consistently—an attempt to play the game of thinking for its own sake and according to its own rules, which can succeed only if thought is disentangled from the other functions of our being and from the “finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct” (*cf. Appearance and Reality*, Pref. and Intr.). No doubt, these two types can be approximated to each other. They would agree on a programme framed in some such general terms as that metaphysics is knowledge of reality as against mere appearance, or of first principles, or of the universe as a whole. Bradley, for all his emphasis on sheer thinking, may even be found to agree that metaphysics seeks to satisfy the “mystical side of our nature” (*l. c.* p. 6). Still, there is a profound difference, certainly of emphasis, and on the whole amounting to a difference in kind. A metaphysician of Bosanquet’s type will care relatively little for formal consistency, but greatly for the matter of his argument, the quality of the outlook upon the world which he is seeking to express and communicate. He will want “to take for our standard what man recognizes as value when his life is fullest and his soul at its highest stretch” (Bosanquet, *l. c.*, p. 3). He will take it for granted that, if the “matter” of the argument is of the right sort, consistency will, as it were, take care of itself; that in systematic theory it is secured, not in virtue of any abstract “form” or scheme of deduction, but in virtue of the concrete insights we think with; that, in fact, inconsistency is in the last resort due to defective insight. A metaphysician of Bradley’s type, by contrast, will delight in the dialectics which result whenever the emphasis is thrown on formal consistency. The “grave experience” which he communicates is the experience of the continued and inescapable defeat of all attempts to think consistently, because the discursive and relational nature of thought impales it unavoidably on the horns of the antinomy of identity and difference. Thence is born his deep conviction that we must affirm an Absolute Experience, in the immediacy of which all the antinomies of thought are harmonized, all its contradictions somehow resolved.

Sheldon has affinities with both these types. His heart, if I may so put it, pulls him towards the Bosanquetian, his head towards the Bradleian type. The head wins in the end, but its victory seems to me to be of that pyrrhic sort which really spells defeat. For Sheldon, as for Bradley, the crux of philosophy lies in the antinomies of thought, and especially in the antinomy of identity and difference, externality and internality of relations. True, Sheldon claims to succeed where Bradley fails. He claims to possess in his *Principle of Productive Duality* a clue to the reconciliation of opposites which is wholly perspicuous to thought, which

can be understood fully here and now, instead of being taken on trust in the Absolute. With magnificent courage he claims to have found the very solution of all problems, the very unifier of all truths—thought's homœopathic cure for thought's dialectical ills. I am fascinated, but, frankly, not convinced. Sheldon's principle seems to me too empty and abstract to possess the fertility he claims for it. Being so abstract, no doubt it supplies a pattern into which well-nigh everything can be fitted. I do not deny that it applies, but—is it my blindness?—I am unable to perceive its power to illuminate and guide. Like Bergson, Sheldon would by sheer intensity of insight get at the very springs of creativeness. Like Hegel, he believes this creativeness to be logical and therefore capable of being understood, so that we can "see" how the very categories are "generated." Like Hegel again, he realizes that the secret of this logic lies in "negation," in the sense of the recognition of *otherness* as compatible with sameness (cf. Bosanquet's similar doctrine of *negativity*, in Ch. 5 of *The Principle of Individuality and Value*). In this last point Sheldon is, I agree, on the right track, but what I doubt is that out of abstractions, however skilfully distilled from the concrete, you can, reversing the process, generate the concrete; that from the bare notion of an assemblage of dyads you can deduce the evolution of the actual world. If you could do that, why could you not predict its future? But this is to anticipate. Let us first follow Sheldon's argument.

Sheldon's concept of the philosopher's task is nothing if not concrete. He defines it as "the lifting, so far as he is able, of man's whole load" (p. 4). In our humanitarian age, this load has a practical as well as a theoretical side. Philosophy must contribute "directly or indirectly toward the diminution of the great sum-total of human suffering" (*ibid.*). The "map of the world" which it is the philosopher's business to furnish, must be a map for right conduct too. Yet the value of knowledge is superior to the value of practise, not in the sense that they are mutually exclusive so that, in choosing the one we must needs forego the other; but in the sense that the value of knowledge is twofold, in that we need it both for its own sake and for the sake of utility (pp. 10, 11). Nay more, the satisfaction of the want of knowledge is the condition for, and by itself goes far towards, the satisfaction of all our other wants, and for this reason philosophy is, even practically, man's most important concern. With this truly Platonic estimate of the function and value of philosophy, no "lover of wisdom" will want to quarrel.

Moreover, Sheldon is delightfully catholic and concrete in his ideal of a philosophy broad-based on the data of any and every kind of experience. With Bertrand Russell's proposals for restricting

philosophy to abstractly tenable hypotheses, such as would be true in all possible worlds, or with the same thinker's advocacy of "ethical neutrality" he has, I am glad to find, no sympathy whatever. "A philosophical system which has not built itself upon such facts as the conservation of energy, wave-motion, the propagation of life, the mystic's intuition of God, the laws of musical form, would be no adequate system" (p. 21). Clearly Sheldon is one of the metaphysicians who, as I like to put it, make themselves guardians of the whole of experience, seeking a point of view from which they can appreciate just what each type of experience reveals of the nature of the world we live in. It is in this spirit, for example, that he writes: "The religious experience, with its persuasion of immediate contact with the Deity, is as genuinely an experience as is the laboratory experiment; and possibly it is attested by as many independent witnesses. Yet such an experience can of course be blindly accepted no more than any other. Every sort of testimony must be granted a respectful hearing, but none must be allowed to elbow out the others. In fact the very nature of our problem compels this tolerance; for we have seen that it is the search for a broader view than any other human discipline directly affords" (p. 20).

So far (Ch. 1) Sheldon's whole orientation is, in terms of my initial classification, Bosanquetian. The reader is set to expect a positive metaphysical construction, rendering in explicit theory the lessons to be drawn from a synthetic survey of all experience. But this is precisely what Sheldon does not go on to give him. Instead he swerves off (Ch. 2) into quite a different enterprise. Right here is the critical point where his Bradleian heads gets the better of his Bosanquetian heart. Instead of giving us a philosophy, he invites our attention to the "disease" from which all philosophy suffers. Why is there so little agreement among philosophers? Why no funded truth? Why this spectacle of unending strife and fratricidal contradiction?

The diagnosis of the cause of this disease is undertaken in eight chapters in which Sheldon critically examines the main types of philosophical systems. This part of the book is extraordinarily well done. Each type is presented by the skilful use of material drawn from diverse thinkers whose views have the required kinship. I wish I had time to dwell in detail on some of the many excellencies of these chapters. Alike for fair and penetrating sympathy in exposition and for acuteness in criticism, they seem to me to belong to the very best work in recent philosophy. I can only mention the apt use of the theories of Avenarius, Natorp, Münsterberg, Baldwin; the illuminating account of the different neo-realistic tendencies

(though S. Alexander's version of realism receives, unaccountably, only an incidental mention); the very appreciative account of intuitionism and mysticism; and, last but not least, the valuable chapter on Thomism (Ch. 10). There is no other survey of contemporary philosophical tendencies so masterly within its compass as this of Sheldon's.

The secret of Sheldon's power of thinking himself into so many apparently conflicting points of view is that each for him is *wholly true*, but beyond a certain critical point utterly barren and unprofitable. He is thus in a position to squeeze every ounce of positive significance out of each system, whilst insisting that there is always a point beyond which its claims to be the whole truth, and its blind denial of the truth of its rivals, make it infertile. Thus, for example, "subjectivism" is perfectly correct in its contention that the whole world may be regarded as a phase of some one's consciousness, but its "critical point," the point of manifest triviality and barrenness, comes when the reality of unperceived objects, *e. g.*, of the percipient's brain, and the distinction between the real and the imaginary, turn out to be inexplicable in terms of subjectivist theory. Similarly, "great subjectivism" puts the highest value on system in theory, on law and order in practise, and thus is led to an intolerant denial of the chaotic loose ends in experience, and of individual initiative and experiment in conduct. But the objectivist and pragmatic theories, which insist on the truth of what subjectivisms deny, exhibit themselves the converse intolerance. Partisanship, resulting in mutual exclusiveness, and due to pushing a true theory beyond the point of fertility, is the common vice of all systems which seek to construe the world from a single point of view. Nor are the deliberately "synthetic" systems—the logical or Hegelian, the æsthetic or Leibnizian, the practical or Thomistic-Aristotelian—less free from this disease of intolerance or one-sidedness, in spite of all their claims to cure the trouble by their breadth and all-inclusiveness. Thus Thomism, for all its amazing subtlety and wealth of empirical detail leaves us in the end wavering "between the extremes of dogma without understanding, and reason without doctrine" (p. 403). Again, absolutism is dogged by skepticism. The transition from whole to parts and *vice versa*, or from reality to appearances and back again, is not mediated or made intelligible. To proclaim faith in a "somehow" does not satisfy the desire clearly to see "how." For all that the absolute is the "most positive concept" ever conceived by man, it is absolutely barren. Yet absolute idealism is "the most honest and the justest system which professional philosophy has to show" (p. 423). This judgment shows that Sheldon has come not to destroy but to fulfil Hegel.

If, thus, the philosophical disease consists everywhere in pushing a genuine truth so far that it becomes barren by contradicting a complementary truth, the remedy most to be desired will be a positive, "vitalizing" principle, enabling us at one stroke to retain all these truths; to remove their mutual contradictions; to explain the actual content of the world; and to supply guidance for conduct.

Such a principle Sheldon professes to find in the actual character of the real world, and he holds it to be only our ignoring of this principle which engenders the strife between externality and internality, sameness and difference.

It is the principle of internality which says to us at every stage: the fact that you have named is not final by itself, but must be *understood*, and the only way to understand it is to see it in its relations to the other facts. It is the principle of externality which says at every stage: here is a fact, completely determined, standing on its own feet, which you must *believe*, independent of its being explained or not. The internality-axiom drives us ever onward, the externality-axiom tells us to be satisfied with what is present. The former shows its power in the real world, in the infinite intertwining at every moment of different laws, causes, and elements; the latter shows its power in the resultant existence here and now of finite events and determinate limited things (p. 435).

The play and counter-play of these principles produces the dialectical strife of which life and theory alike are full. Yet "somehow the real world itself has harmonized these antagonisms: if it did not, it would be instantly annulled. . . . Reality has solved the problem; man has not, and so man does not know what reality properly is" (p. 453). Now, "our thought gets its material from reality," hence, "the dialectic must be soluble—not only in reality as the Hegelians have taught us, but also in our particular vexed understandings" (p. 454). Herewith we are brought to the very threshold of Sheldon's great metaphysical discovery.

The whole root of the trouble lies indeed in the simplest of all things in the world, namely, a quite arbitrary dictum. Its simplicity lies in its arbitrariness; the dictum stands alone, ungrounded, unsupported in any way whatsoever. That sameness and difference exclude each other is the purest dogma, a fulmination out of the darkness, justified by no utility or self-evidence. Search as we may, we find no argument offered, in all the long history of thought, to excuse it. . . . We observe in every moment of our waking lives that two things are the same while at the same time different. Two oranges are of the same color, yet of different shapes; a particular stone is now in my hand, now flying through the air, yet the same stone; you are the same man to-day that you were yesterday in spite of added experiences. Always we witness the opposite of this dictum, yet men have felt, or thought they felt, a certain inner compulsion to utter it. Thought seems to have set up a rule of its own, independent of observation—and doing so, has allowed itself to become divorced from reality (p. 456).

And thus we hold the simple secret in our hands. Let Bertrand Russell and F. H. Bradley, in the pride of intellect, declare that identity is identity and difference is difference, and that never can

the one be reconciled with the other. We must become again like little children and learn once more to behold all around us in the world how "sameness and difference may co-habit without shame" (p. 474). Even "the completed infinite" ceases to be self-contradictory. It is the duality, the otherness, at the heart of the union of these two supposedly hostile principles which is the mainspring of their fertility for life and thought. It solves all the time-honored antinomies. "The principle by which we have rid ourselves of exclusion is not an *exclusive* inclusion, but a *free* inclusion. Herein our remedy differs so far as we know *toto caelo* from any remedy that has hitherto been proposed, either by partisan or synthetist" (p. 476).

Here, then, we have the Principle of Productive Duality, the very principle of free creativeness. Identity and difference, we learn, though distinct, are not mutually opposed, but rather mutually contributory. "The two aspects are always of one and the same reality. They are distinct, yet they are united; they are different, yet in their difference they display a sameness and a reciprocal conformation" (p. 493). Reality comprises all aspects. It is through and through dual in structure. "It is free and constrained, it is static and dynamic, it is term and relation, individual and universal" (*ibid.*). The positive relationship of all these aspects "should elucidate, as none of the synthetic types was able to do, the transition from one real thing or event to another, show how one implies another, how event gives rise to event—and show it *in concreto*; in a word it should reveal the way in which the internality of relations works" (pp. 493–4). It must be a principle of *deduction* which is also a principle of *production*. It must not only remove contradictions, but generate novelties. It must furnish a map of reality showing how its parts are joined. It must enable us to *see* how the creative process, once begun, goes on in definite inexhaustible fertility. It must reveal the necessary connection between cause and effect. It must enable us to break that virgin soil for philosophy, the origin of the categories. Reality is an infinite assemblage of dyads, each having its inner substantial, as well as its relative adjectival status. Here is a paradigm of productivity:

Suppose the simplest possible dyad: any two things which possess both sameness and difference. Call them *A* and *B*. Then *B*, being the same as *A*, must have the relation to *B* which *A* has, to wit, difference. *B* is therefore different from *B*. (This of course does not destroy the identity of *B*, as sameness and difference are not mutually destructive.) This second *B* should be called by a new name, to distinguish it from the first, *viz.*, *C*. Now *C*, being the same with *B*, must be, as *B* is, different from itself—hence is implied a new entity *D*. This series is indefinitely long. Herein is generated the notion of a class; for we have a collection of individuals, all displaying a sameness, while the number of the collection actually taken is indifferent. It is potentially infinite (p. 509).

Sheldon's attempts to illustrate his principle by empirical instances, *e. g.*, the iceberg floating on the sea, as well as to display its fertility in application to ethical and political problems, lead to much interesting, if occasionally fantastic, discussion. That the ills of the social order are to be cured, not through revolutions, but through an "aristocracy of altruists" (p. 519) is a fascinating suggestion. On the other hand, the doctrine that "a mode of conduct which creates further good conduct . . . is the only true, because the only *productive* morality" (p. 522), is plausible only so long as the reader forgets, with Sheldon himself, that by the same token there is a productive immorality: a mode of conduct which creates further evil conduct in oneself and others. With a readier faith the reader will respond to the suggestion that the reform of society must be built upon the establishment of strong moral individualities, though he will suspect that Sheldon has learned this, like much other wisdom, from common human experience, without generating it from any abstract Principle of Productive Duality.

I have quoted at length in order to enable readers of this review to judge for themselves the value of Sheldon's theory. In that Sheldon promises, in further studies, to show in detail how to deduce the actual world from his general principle, it is perhaps premature to formulate a verdict. Any demonstration which he may give will certainly be awaited with interest. Meanwhile, two impressions are deepened in my mind with every fresh reading, especially of his last chapter, in which his creative principle is most fully expounded and its fertility most hopefully proclaimed. One is, that at present Sheldon has furnished no proof, better than the manipulations of abstract symbols illustrated in the quotation above, of the power of his principle to articulate, let alone "to explain, *i. e.*, logically to generate," the actual universe as we have it here and now. The other is, that when Sheldon returns to the practical problem of the diminution of human suffering—surely *the* field above all others in which we would wish him to exhibit the fertility of his principle—he has, in effect, to confess his failure to deduce any concrete solution or policy whatever. No doubt this failure is skilfully covered up by the suggestion that the philosopher can not, and need not, do more than point out the ideals to be kept in mind, leaving it to specialist and expert to apply them in detail. Sheldon even ingeniously declares that this dualism of general principle and specific application supports his whole position. But that there is a real failure here, at least in the sense of an implicit withdrawal of the extravagant hopes and promises of earlier pages, is, I think, clear from the confession of his Preface:

Though the knowledge of the creative principle is requisite for an understanding of the specific structure of reality, and though it will explain more of that structure than the present volume can show, such knowledge is not enough for the purpose of human thought and practise. Herein lies the negative side of the above. Another sort of knowledge must be added; it is afforded by the special sciences and by practical experience. While the human mind remains liable to mistakes in reasoning and to preconceived opinion, men can operate successfully with the fundamental principle only after they have empirically ascertained the details to which it is to apply. Without such acquaintance, the general rule is as likely to mislead as to enlighten. The particular working of the rule can not usually be known before the occasion presents itself; and when it does so, we need both an open-minded empiricism and a resolute will to ensure the desirable application. The rival claims of individual and society, of religion and science, of dogma and free thought, of discipline and liberty, must indeed be adjusted by the aid of the first principle—can not otherwise be adjusted; but the adjustment may not be carried through without expert knowledge also of the conditions in each particular issue (p. iv).

Does not Sheldon here forget that, by his own statement, thought draws its material from reality? If the Principle of Productive Duality is really drawn from reality as revealed in human experience, then somewhere the philosopher must possess that expertness which, in turn, will make fresh applications possible. Else the fruitful union of expert knowledge of detail and abstract principle is still left unmediated, unless by expert knowledge we mean, not "another sort of knowledge," but *precisely the knowledge of the principle in its concrete embodiments*, and not merely in abstract formulation. It is the divorce of these two sorts of knowledge which makes Sheldon's principle empty, precisely when, by all his praises of it, it should be of teeming richness. Sheldon's own rich mind deceives him concerning the poverty of his principle.

I can not conclude, especially after this criticism, without a tribute to the vivacity and felicity of Sheldon's style, which, throughout much technical debate, preserves the wit and flavor of good talk. Nor must I forget to mention the broad humanity of his sympathies and the maturity and independence of his judgment. He is never dazzled by mere aggressiveness or cleverness, nor duped by the latest catch-words. The reader carries away a vivid impression of poise and sanity and scholarship.

In general, Sheldon's book seems to me the most important contribution to metaphysics which has appeared on this side of the Atlantic since Royce's *The World and the Individual*.

R. F. ALFRED HOERNLÉ.

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